



Roger Platt, MD
Director
Office of School Health
49-51 Chambers Street
Room 600
New York, NY 10007

June 2009

Dear Parent(s)/Guardian(s):

The New York City Department of Education is writing to inform you of the New York State Public Health Law with regard to immunization requirements for varicella (chicken pox) that may affect your child(ren). For the 2009-2010 school year, the law requires that all students entering grades Pre-K through 10 be immunized against chickenpox (varicella).

Varicella immunization for students in grades Pre-K through 10 requires that they receive one (1) dose after their first birthday. Although only one (1) dose of vaccine is required, the recommendation is for all students to receive two (2) doses of varicella-containing vaccine.

Exemptions from this requirement include the following:

- A statement from a licensed health provider indicating that your child has had chickenpox (varicella). Parental statement of your child having this disease will not be accepted as proof of immunity.
- A medical exemption based on a written statement from a New York State licensed physician. The letter must indicate that there is a valid medical reason why your child cannot receive the varicella vaccine. Exemption is subject to review and approval by the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene. Please note that if a student is granted a medical exemption and a child in the school is diagnosed with chickenpox, the student will be excluded from school until three weeks after the child with chickenpox is no longer contagious.
- A request for religious exemption written by the student's parent(s) or guardian(s) indicating that their religious beliefs which they hold to be both sincere and genuine will prohibit their child from becoming immunized. Exemption is subject to review and approval by the New York City Department of Education's Office of School Health. Please note that if a student is granted a religious exemption and a child in the school is diagnosed with chickenpox, the student will be excluded from school until three weeks after the child with chickenpox is no longer contagious.

Students who do not qualify for one of these exemptions and have not been immunized against chickenpox will be excluded from school and not be permitted to return until they comply with this and all other immunization requirements. If you have any questions regarding this vaccine, please discuss them with your physician or contact the nurse at your child's school. Thank you for your cooperation in this regard.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Roger Platt".

Roger Platt, MD, Director
Office of School Health